

## Executive Report of the CETAF 53rd General Assembly May 9-10, 2023, Gothenburg, Sweden

Ana Casino, Executive Director of CETAF AISBL, and Michelle Price, Vice President of CETAF (Acting President)

The meeting on the 9-10 May 2023 began with a welcome and presentations from the Directors of the three institutions that belong to the Gothenburg Consortium (Natural History Museum of Gothenburg, the Gothenburg Botanical Garden and the Herbarium of the University of Gothenburg). The meeting was formally opened at 9h30 by Michelle Price (CETAF Vice-President, Acting President). A total of 36 of 39 voting members of the consortium were present or represented (4 proxies) in the General Assembly.

The following items were approved in the **CETAF Business and the Annual reporting** session:

1. The Agenda for CETAF53 (28 votes cast, 28 votes in favour);
2. The Records (minutes and annexes) of CETAF52 hosted by the National Museum of Natural History, Jerusalem and Steinhardt Museum of Natural History, Israel, 17-18 November 2022 (31 votes cast, 31 votes in favour);
3. The CETAF Annual Accounts 2022. The Auditor of the CETAF Accounts for 2022 (V. Demanoff, MNHN, Paris) recommended the financial reports for approval (35 votes cast, 35 votes in favour). Isabel Rey, MNCN Madrid, was approved as the second CETAF auditor;
4. CETAF Executive Committee report was accepted with the discharge of the Executive Committee (35 votes cast, 35 votes in favour). The CETAF Bylaws were approved inter-sessionally prior to CETAF 53.

The **CETAF General Secretariat Report** (April 2022- April 2023) detailed the activities of the secretariat, highlighting its role as partner in numerous EU-funded projects, in specially underpinning the recently launched CETAF TETTRIs project, and in supporting advocacy on behalf of CETAF and overall representation of the consortium.

The **CETAF Executive Committee Election (2023-2027)** was reopened on the 9<sup>th</sup> May at CETAF53 for nominations for the 4 legal positions (President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer) and 4 Ordinary Member positions. The deadline for nominations is the 6 October 2023. Send your nominations to the CETAF EC Secretary: [gila.kahila@mail.huji.ac.il](mailto:gila.kahila@mail.huji.ac.il) (with [ana.casino@cetaf.org](mailto:ana.casino@cetaf.org), in copy). The list of nominees will be sent to the membership 6 weeks before CETAF54 in NHM Vienna in November (dates to be confirmed in late November). For further information on the roles, time commitment and benefits of EC membership, the CETAF Guide to the Executive Committee is available in the CETAF 53 meeting package.

As new applicant for **CETAF Membership**, the General Assembly approved the Albanian Research Centre of Flora and Fauna (entity that integrates the Museum of Natural Sciences, the Botanical Garden, and the National Herbarium) become a Temporary Observer for 1 year term.

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The reports from the **CETAF Working Groups** (Biodiversity Monitoring; Collections; Communications; Digitisation; Earth Sciences; e-Publishing; European Projects Advisory Group; Information Science & Technology Commission; Legislation and Regulations; Scientific Research Group) demonstrated that they are the drivers of progress ensuring that the Consortium can tackle major issues or challenges and address relevant topics, like the CBD Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and linked biodiversity monitoring actions or the development of the CETAF Research Agenda for European Natural History Museums by the new Research Agenda Task Force. Working group activities are critical for implementing the CETAF strategy and contributing to the progress of the Consortium on key strategic, technical, research and publishing issues. The reports of the Working Groups showcased the engagement of the leaders and core teams for the benefit of the CETAF community as a whole, and the impact of communication and coordination across groups.

Encourage your staff to join the CETAF working groups (see the CETAF website for information on the coordinators or email [CETAF@info.org](mailto:CETAF@info.org) to contact them).

As part of the WG reports, updating on the CETAF e-SCoRe award was given (23 applications, good gender and geographic representation – award winner to be announced on the 22 May 2023) as well as on BioCASE (protocol and software for publishing and harvesting specimen and observational data, used in GBIF but also in a range of special interest networks - Global Genome Biodiversity Network (GGBN), OpenUp!, Australian Virtual Herbarium (AVH), JACQ and NFDI4Biodiversity) and GeoCASE, the repository and access entry point for integrating the European geological collections, which is currently under development.

The reports from the **CETAF linked projects** (BiCIKL, BGE, DiSSCo Prepare, MOBILISE Cost Action, Synthesys+) and **initiatives** (CETAF-DEST and EJT) and from the **CETAF TETTRIS** project itself, demonstrated that concerted-coordinated and targeted efforts towards achieving commons goals are key to community cohesion and progress. Outcomes from the CETAF working groups, CETAF linked projects and CETAF community project TETTRIs are endorsed by the community and are widely implemented in or used in the biodiversity domain more widely showing how CETAF has works across borders and plays a key role in assuring the sustainability of initiatives beyond the timeframe of funded projects themselves. Interactions between the CETAF working groups and the involvement of them in projects also ensures coherence and efficiency in reaching common goals and the development of synergies across initiatives. TETTRIs was outlined as the CETAF community project that will provide the means to sustain taxonomic expertise and knowledge, through training and capacity building. CETAF's strong position in Europe is reinforced by the recent **CETAF Statement for the sustainability of taxonomic knowledge and expertise**, written

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upon request by Vujadin Kovacevic, Policy Officer in the European Commission, DG ENV, with CETAF encouraged to express its requirements as well as potential contributions. The implementation of the GBF in Europe requires the articulation of indicators and mechanisms for planning, monitoring, reporting and reviewing implementation; mechanisms for providing necessary financial resources for implementation; and the development of strategic frameworks for monitoring.

The **CETAF Research Agenda (RA) for European Natural History Institutions** is under development with the CETAF Task Force having met in Geneva in March 2023. The RA will be presented at CETAF 54. As part of the renewal of the CETAF Strategy (2025-2035) and creation of the CETAF Business Plan, the CETAF 10 year Achievement Report was presented along with the CETAF Value Proposition. The GA discussed the creation of a new vision and mission for CETAF, working on the themes and words that should be included in their conception. The CETAF membership fees will be presented, along with scenarios for membership criteria, at CETAF 54 for implementation in 2024. An increase in fees, in line with inflation, are likely to ensure sustainability of the current CETAF operations and CETAF Secretariat. The momentum of the consortium and implementation of the CETAF work plan and strategy depend on membership contributions.

The commitment to CETAF was showcased by the completion of the programme of CETAF General Assembly meetings up until the spring of 2026, as follows: Autumn 2023 - NHMW Vienna, Austria; Spring 2024 - NHM Oslo, Norway; Autumn 2024 – MNCN Madrid, Spain; Spring 2025 -Luxembourg, Luxembourg; Autumn 2025 - BGBM Berlin, Germany).

An International Symposium on Paleo-Bioinspiration, endorsed by CETAF, will be held in Paris on the 13-15 September 2023 (<https://palaeo-insp.sciencesconf.org>). CETAF members are invited to disseminate the information on this event within their institutions.

### **Acronyms**

BiCIKL – Biodiversity Community Integrated Knowledge Library; BGE – Biodiversity Genomics Europe; DEST – Distributed European School for Taxonomy; DiSSCo – Distributed System of Scientific Collections; EJT – European Journal of Taxonomy; e-SCoRe – Excellence in Scientific Collections-based Research Award; TETTRIS – Transforming European Taxonomy through Training, Research and Innovations